(xv) To ensure appropriate follow-up to issues raised through social audit, legislative bodies and regulatory authorities might treat social audit resolutions on par with formal audit paras to ensure consideration and disposal within a time-bound frame work.

(xvi) Given the critical importance of total disclosure of information for effective social audit, States might consider passing Right to Information legislation, taking into account the legislation already on the books in such states as Rajasthan.

Financial and administrative powers for Panchayati Raj Institutions

†2283. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) the details of measures being taken to equip the Panchayati Raj Institutions in the country with financial and administrative powers;

(b) whether measures taken in the past have yielded positive results, if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether he has recently made visits to review the working of different institutions of the country; and

(d) if so. the steps taken by Government to solve the problems informed by the representatives of these institutions?

THE MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) A joint programme of action has been chalked out at the seven Round Tables held last year between the Union Minister of Panchayati Raj and State Ministers of Panchayati Raj to ensure that on the basis of Activity Mapping, Panchayats at various levels are devolved with funds, functions and functionaries to enable them to emerge as institutions of self-government, as envisaged in Article 243G of the Constitution. The Sixth Round Table at Guwahati also devised measures to undertake formal audit and to institutionalize social audit measures, so that Gram Panchayats are made responsible, through the Gram Sabha, to the village community as a whole. The relevant extract from the conclusions is attached as statement,

[Refer to the Statement-I appended to the answer to unstarred question No. 2282.] †Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

The Joint action programme, covering all dimensions of Panchayati Raj has been brought together in a compendium comprising 150 points for action that were adopted unanimously at the conclusion of last Round Table in Jaipur. A Committee of Chief Secretaries of States and State Panchayati Raj Secretaries has been constituted under the Chairmanship of the Secretary (Panchayati Raj) to monitor the progress on the implementation of the 150 action points listed in the compendium and to report to Council of State Ministers of Panchayati Raj under the Chairmanship of the Union Minister for Panchayati Raj. Two review meetings of the Committee have so far been held on the 11th April, 2005 and 29th June, 2005. The inaugural meeting of the Council, was held on 5th-6th August, 2005 at Kochi at which a Joint Statement of conclusions was adopted as per Statement [Refer to the Statement-I appended to the answer to Unstarred Question No. 2280.]

The Minister has now initiated a process of visiting each of the States/UTs to review with the authorities concerned the progress in implementing the points for action contained in the compendium. During these tours, the Minister visits Gram Sabhas and Ward Sabhas, and attends meetings of the Gram Panchayat, Intermediate Panchayat and District Panchayat. It is expected that this will accelerate the base of implementation of provisions of Part IX, read with Article 243ZD of the Constitution and bring about greater conformity, in both letter and spirit, to the Constitutional provisions of Panchayati Raj in all States/UTs concerned.

(c) & (d): So far, the Minister has made the following visits:—

Karnataka:	29 April—1st May 2005
West Bengal:	13—15 May 2005
Uttaranchal:	21—22 June, 24 June 2005

The Minister has signed a Joint Statement of Conclusions with the Chief Minister of each of three States chalking out the roadmap in respect of the State concerned for strengthening the PRIs. The three joint statements so far signed [Refer to the Statements II, III and IV appended to the answer to unstarred question No. 2290.] The action points in the Statement of Conclusions are being followed up with each State concerned. Best practices of each State visited have also been disseminated to other States for adoption.